

"TAKE POST!"

Newsletter of the
2/3rd Australian Light Anti-Aircraft
Regiment Association

April 2001



B Troop, 8 Aust Light Anti-Aircraft Battery (Airborne) at Melville WA – July 1943

REUNION NOTICE

The Anzac Reunion will be held on **Tuesday April 24, 2001** from 12 noon until 3:30 pm (doors do not open before 11:30 am). The cost of Annual Subscription, lunch and drinks is **\$25**. Please see the enclosed notice regarding lunch arrangements.

The venue is the same as last year —

**The Air Force Convention Centre,
4 Cromwell Rd, South Yarra.**

(Access to the car park is from Cromwell Rd).

John Campbell, Hon Secretary.

NOTICE OF MEETING

The Annual General Meeting will be held at:

**The Air Force Convention Centre,
4 Cromwell Road, South Yarra**

at 11:45 am, Tuesday, April 24, 2001
(doors do not open before 11:30 am)

The AGM is held just prior to the
Anzac Reunion.

Members are reminded that nominations for
Committee must be lodged with the Honorary
Secretary 14 days before the meeting.

John Campbell, Hon Secretary.

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

*It is with sincere regret
we report the passing of
these former comrades:*

J. A FENNESY	9th
W. E. [ELLIS] KELLY	7th
W.R. [BILL] WADDELL	Sigs
M. M. SHYING	Sigs
JACK DUNN	7th
N. H. MARSHALL	9th
C. E. D. [DOUG] SIMSON	8th
J. R. [JACK] HARKER	9th
H. J. [HARRY] REID.	8th
E. G. PITMAN.	9th
L. P. [LEN] MORGAN	8th
B. A. [BERT] BAGLIN	7th
RALPH WELCH	8th
NEIL ANDERSON	9th

Lest We Forget

MELBOURNE ANZAC MARCH 2001

Members of 2/3 Lt A A Regiment will assemble as usual in Flinders Street on the east side of Swanston Street. It is estimated that our Regiment will move off at approx. 9.20 am.

Eyes right will be ordered at the Eternal Flame *not* when abreast of the official party.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION

Naturally you wish to be a financial member of our Association and the treasurer can grant your wish – just fill in the enclosed remittance slip, add a cheque for \$5 and post it to

John Campbell
PO Box 205, Mentone 3194

If attending the Annual Reunion the subscription is included with the cost of lunch and drinks. Our thanks to those who, last year, forwarded their \$5 with welcome accompanying letters.

DOUG SIMSON, 8th BATTERY'S FURPHY MAN

Doug who died late last year was the best known soldier in 8th Battery during the Siege of Tobruk, because he delivered to each anti-aircraft gun crew its daily ration of water.

There were no favourites with Doug.

For most of the Siege, each crew received 4 pints of water per man, per day, for cooking and drinking. With the summer temperatures in the desert going to 115 degrees Fahrenheit in the shade – each drop was carefully conserved. No more than a cupful would be spared for a shave, the remains of that cupful being used with the aid of a wash-cloth to bathe.

When able to boil the water, most of the gunners found that drinking it in the form of black tea was the best way to alleviate their thirst.

Like the water-carriers of most wars, Doug was the bearer of the latest news, rumours and occasional mail.

Towards the end of the Siege, the troop's ration was increased to 6 pints a day, so with the weather becoming a little cooler conditions eased.

As the guncrews lived in rather isolated situations, Doug's arrival in his tanker truck was always a welcome sight.

2/3 AUSTRALIAN LIGHT ANTI-AIRCRAFT REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

President: JACK CRITTENDEN

Vice Presidents: LES HARRIS, RON BRYANT

Immediate Past President: CEC RAE.

Hon Secretary: JOHN CAMPBELL,
Box 205, PO Mentone, Vic.3194.
Phone 9583 8756.

Assistant Secretary: BRUCE TULLOCH
Phone 9841 8424

Hon Treasurer: JOHN HEPWORTH.

Newsletter Editor: RON BRYANT.

Committee: IAN RUTTER, DAVE THOMSON
ROY THOMSON, FRANK WASHBOURNE
MAL WEBSTER

W.A. Contact: GORDON CONNOR.
6 Exton Place, Spearwood, WA 6163.

THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

The last twelve months have been very eventful times. In Australia we are lucky that the most significant local happening has been a happy celebration. Of course I refer to the Olympic Games. We were all impressed with our Millenium celebrations but they were really just a practice for the big show – the Games!

For six weeks commencing in September, Australia proved to the world that it could stage an event of such size and complexity without major hitches. We did it well and we can be very proud of its success, particularly the atmosphere of happiness and friendliness that was evident.

Earlier in the year another reason for us to be proud was the effort of a small number of Army personnel who served overseas to help bring order and some stability in the chaos of East Timor during its struggle for independence.

Modern media coverage reminds us daily that other people are not as fortunate as Australians. When I see a film of the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians I remember those very friendly but extremely poor families that lived in the villages surrounding our camp at Khassa.

Even when we 'acquired' their oranges they did not get too angry with us. Probably those bright and happy children we saw then are now deeply involved in the politics of their homeland.

I am looking forward to catching up with old mates at our reunion on 24th April. I guess that many members, like me, are making more frequent use of the Gold Card to keep the old bones moving.

The year 2001 marks the 60th year since our Regiment participated in three important engagements of World War 2. On the 11th April 1941, 8th Battery in Libya was cut off and isolated by the German Afrika Korps and spent the next five and a half months besieged in Tobruk in active resistance.

On 20th May 1941, the Germans commenced the first major "all air" operation in military history – the Battle for Crete. Our men of 7th Battery fought hard but were overwhelmed by superior forces,

On 15th June 1941, after weeks of activity in the Western Desert, our 9th Battery took part in *Operation Battleaxe* which was designed to relieve the Allied forces that were besieged in Tobruk.

Unexpected enemy mechanised strength was met and the operation failed. So in the Regiment's first year, each Battery had been in heavy actions, and had advanced from being raw beginners in warfare to being experienced soldiers, tested and now confident to meet further trials, together with the very welcome fresh troops who came to reinforce them. How fortunate we are to still be around sixty years later!

The Anzac Day march is always an extremely important and popular event with the people of Melbourne. If fit enough to make it that day, we want to see you march behind our banner.

I would like to say *thank you* from us all to our Honorary Secretary John Campbell, our Honorary Treasurer John Hepworth and our Editor Ron Bryant. All members appreciate the good job they have done during the year.

Jack Crittenden



Nonagenarians

(L to R): Doug Davis, Les Harris, Bert Baglin, Neil Anderson and Tom Dawson.

Others who have attained 90 years of age are Keith Sitlington and Phil Bishop.

Hearty congratulations to you all!

From the Secretary's Desk

Again, during the past year many members and kinfolk have dropped me a line about a variety of subjects. Here are some snippets:

To Robert, son of **Doug Simson**: Maybe Ron Bryant could use some of those interesting photos taken by your dad? Keith, son of **John Purcell**, sent greetings to **Les Harris**.

Patricia Kelly advised the sad news of the death on April 30, 1998, of her husband **Ellis Kelly** aged 87. **Terry Gleeson** advised the deaths of **W R Waddell** and **M M Shying**.

Jan Hammond, daughter of **Noel Moulton**, advised us that Noel is comfortably installed at the Murchison Nursing Home. While **Ted Sands** wrote to say that he was on a life support machine.

Roy McLaren questions whether our Unit received sufficient recognition for the part that the Regiment played in World War Two.

Edie, wife of **Jim Russell**, reports that Jim is now in a nursing home and just 'hanging on'. *Keep hanging in there, Jim!*

Joyce Ritchie, daughter of **John Hipworth**, enjoys getting *Take Post* So say all of us!

Arthur Spiller (RHQ) finds the personal notes interesting and enjoyed last year's article "Lake Boga at War". The "Guess Who" gunner on page 5 of the last *Take Post* was none other than Arthur Spiller!

Jack Harker sends greetings to **Cec Rae**, **Choco Carmichael**, **Darkie Paterson** and the **Coghlan Boys**. Jack is regularly in touch with **Keith Wilson** and also wonders if **Jasper** is still backing winners?

Had the usual epistle from **George Roberts** – **Bluey Page** called in to see George on his way to Adelaide. And **Frank O'Toole** apologised for not being able to attend Reunion 2000.

Werribee 1940 **Don Coghlan** talking to **David Carty**, "Bloody hell, how did that thin, young kid get here – would have had to cook his age I bet!" He was referring to no other than our editor, **Ron Bryant**.

Ralph Hawkey is now in a hostel at Cobram near to his wife who is in a nursing home. Ralph is finding it comfortable and easier than farming!

Jack Leaker who joined the Regiment in New Guinea in 1943, enjoyed "On Target" and appreciates *Take Post* each year.

Esme, widow of **Killer Curtis** now deceased, advises that the visit to the annual reunion was the highlight of **Killer's** year.

Sam McLaren, grandson of **Jack Dunn**, advised that Jack requested that the Unit colour patch be on his coffin – this was done.

Alan Rundle sends greetings to all his mates but just can't get to a reunion.

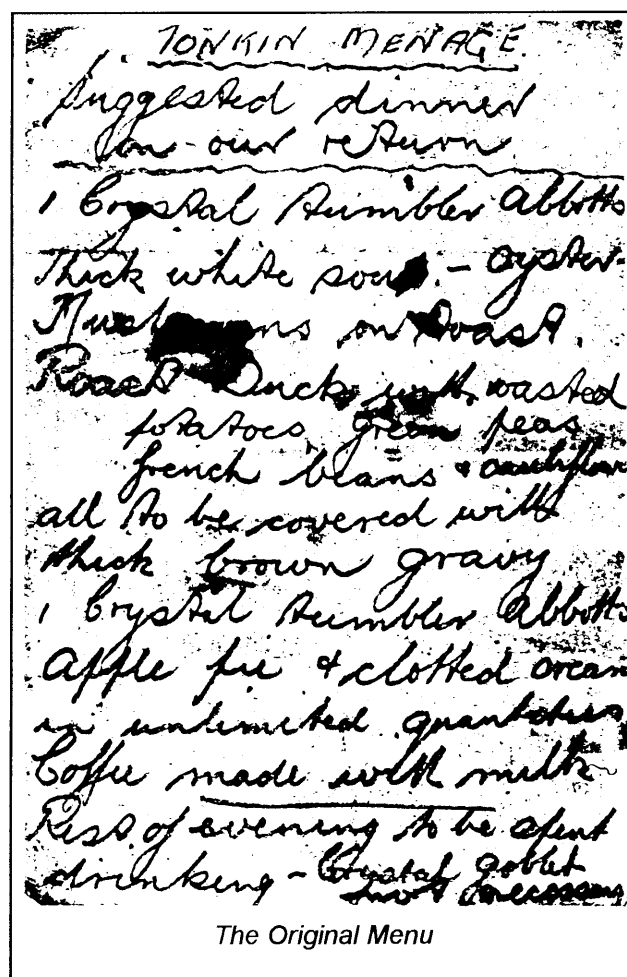
My thanks to all – cheerio until next Take Post.

John Campbell, Hon Sec.

Prisoners' Dream of a good dinner

Mrs Valda Malloch, widow of Bill Malloch, sent in this copy of the original Menu planned by Sergeant Rol Tonkin and Gunner Jack Clift at Salonika, (Thessaloniki) Greece, in 1941 while prisoners of war.

The dinner, as dreamt, was duly celebrated with friends and comrades at Mildura in August 1945, with a formal printed Menu complete with color patch



Lieutenant Colonel Bertram Allan Baglin

8/12/1910 – 13/11/2000

The entry in Sentry's Log of April 2000 *Take Post*, referred to our Patron's health and conveyed good wishes for his approaching 90th birthday. His service career had been previously referred to in 1994 *Take Post*.

Unfortunately, Bert's life ended as the result of complications following a fall in his home. He died peacefully a few days later in hospital on 13th November 2000.

In accordance with Bert's wishes his relatives arranged a private funeral, with notice of death delayed for a week after the service.

Bert's comrades in Legacy, believing that his fifty years of service to ex-servicemen, widows and their children should be acknowledged, arranged a Legacy service. This was held in Legacy House in the Comradeship Room prior to the normal Tuesday meeting on 5th December.

John Campbell, secretary of our unit association and Bruce Tulloch, as guests respectively of Ron Bryant and Les Harris, attended along with Bert's niece who had delivered the eulogy at the private funeral.

The Legacy service was conducted by Legatee Rob Allison, with Legatee Les Harris as a representative of 2/3 LAA Regiment speaking of Bert's military record and his service to Legacy.

It will be some consolation to our members that the 2/3 LAA Regiment's representation at the ceremony showed the respect we felt for our former President and Patron.

The following anecdote was contributed to *Take Post* just before Bert passed on:

The photograph centered on this page was taken in 1989, Miss Mockridge, then 112 years of age, is shown with Bert and the watercolour portrait of the debonair, young officer many of our readers will recognise as the Bert Baglin we knew in 1940.

After reading in the Geelong *Advertiser* of the great age Miss Caroline Maud Mockridge had reached, Bert contacted her at the Chesterfield Nursing Home and showed her this signed portrait her younger brother had painted in 1940 while in camp with Bert at Royal Park.

Thomas Mockridge (1882—1942) was then 58 years of age and had been assigned the task of using his artistic talents to develop camouflage techniques and colour schemes for tents, uniforms, vehicles and

equipment to help minimise casualties in battle situations. It was possibly, to relieve the monotony of that task that led him to use his finest skill in painting Bert's portrait.

Miss Mockridge was delighted to view the framed example of her brother's well-known skill, while Bert discovered that age had not prevented Miss Mockridge from remembering in great

detail her recollections of life in the early days in Geelong.

Sadly Thomas Mockridge lost his life in New Guinea in 1942 when he was 60 years of age.

* * *



Miss Mockridge, the portrait and Bert Baglin

HITLER'S DIGGER SLAVES

Last year, *Take Post* reported that Alex Barnett's book "*Hitler's Digger Slaves*" could then be ordered. Unexpected delays occurred with publication and Alex hopes the book will be available within the next couple of months.

(Enquiries may be made to Alex Barnett by email jobob@midcoast.com.au
or to War Book Shop, 13 Veronica Place, Loftus, NSW 2232.)

KINDNESS IN GERMANY 1945

Bruce Tulloch, 7 Battery, recently received a letter from Corinna, a great grand-daughter of a peasant lady, Rosa Schumann, who lived in the village of Wulfershausen, near Wurzburg, in Germany. Corinna was writing a dissertation in the subject History for her Leaving Certificate. She was making a report on the last days of the war in Wulfershausen, 1945.

Bruce told Corinna:—

During those particular days, I was in a small POW barracks with fourteen mates and two German guards, at Wulfershausen. We were sent to work with several peasant families, working during the day and returning to the barracks each night. My mate, Charles Carr, a South Australian, was sent to work for Rosa Schumann (great-grandmother); I was allotted to the Behr family.

By March-April 1945 the American Army had crossed the river Rhine and was advancing rapidly. It was decided to round up the POWs in the area to march us away from the American advance. Three of us decided to make a break if possible. Rosa told my mate Charles that if he could escape, she would hide him. Early one morning we were awakened by the guards and told to pack our belongings and to prepare to leave. At that hour it was still dark, so we made a run for it. Luck was with us. We left the village and hid out all day. In the evening we returned. Rosa lived at the outskirts of the village, so we had easy access to enter her barn and we climbed into the loft.

There were three of us; not Charles alone, we wondered how Rosa would react. We decided to lie low for a few days as we could see German troops retreating.

Next morning as Rosa was collecting food for the animals, I accidentally dropped a knife at her feet and she really got a shock. Charles immediately made himself known and explained that there were three of us, but she was not concerned. For the remaining eight days we were in the loft; her young daughter Rosemarie who was about 11 years of age, repeatedly climbed up to the rafters with food for us.

We continually kept a lookout for the American troops while German troops passed through, and on several occasions Rosa provided shelter for German officers for the night.

On the tenth day, American tanks appeared on the road and ground troops were following along the River Shale that flowed along the outskirts of the village. As they came closer we decided to clamber out of the barn to be ready to make ourselves known. I had to do a lot of quick talking in English from a distance while rifles were aimed at us!

We then escorted them into the village, assuring them that the German troops had already retreated. The American colonel searched the village for wounded troops, to no avail.

We shall never forget Rosa, a remarkable woman, who put her life at risk to hide and feed us for so many days.

It was wonderful for me to return to Germany in 1973 and stay for several days with my wife and daughter at Wulfershausen.

Rosa passed away in May 1999, but I still correspond with the family.

Bruce Tulloch.



7th Battery, 2/3rd Lt A A

THE ROMMEL PAPERS *Edited by B H Liddell-Hart. Published 1953.*

A book review by the 2/12 Fd Regt Association newsletter editor, Max Parsons, who admits to a certain bias in quoting more references to the artillery than other arms.

This graphic account of enemy operations and the extraordinary story of Field Marshal Rommel will appeal to those who served in the Middle East for it describes what happened on the *other* side of the fence. Whether you were there or not, the account of Rommel's European and North African campaigns will fascinate *all* 2/3 members. Rommel himself wrote most of the 500 pages. In amazing detail he recorded the activities of the Afrika Korps and other German-Italian forces and explained his tactics and strategy..

Australians of Ninth Division admired Rommel. Initially, when halted at Tobruk, the General tended to under-rate the Australians. His letters to his wife show how he was forced to change his mind.

Before his first attempt to take Tobruk, on April 14, 1941 he wrote, *Today may well see the end of the Battle of Tobruk*. On the 16th he wrote, *We can expect the fortress to be ours very shortly*. On April 25th, *Once Tobruk has fallen, which I hope will be in 10 days or a fortnight, the situation here will be secure*. On May 6th, *Water is very short in Tobruk the British troops are getting only half a litre [per day]. With our dive-bombers I hope to cut their ration still further*.

As is well-known, the fortress stood out against the Germans for many more months. However, Rommel was not prone to many such errors of judgement, as later events proved. Rommel provides a good description of the Tobruk frontline fortifications (which had been constructed by the Italians)

... the defences consisted of two lines of strong-points, not in the usual form of concrete pill-boxes with loop holes but completely sunk into the ground. The outer belt was surrounded by an anti-tank ditch, covered with thin boarding disguised by a layer of sand and stones on top ... Each defence work had a diameter of about 90 yards and consisted of several heavily concreted dugouts each holding 30 to 40 men. The dugouts were inter-connected by communication trenches (about 8 feet deep) covered with boards lightly topped with earth. ... The second defence line lay 2 to 3000 yards behind the first and was of similar design without the anti-tank ditch.

On April 30, Rommel attacked in strength and succeeded in creating a salient in the fortified line. He describes the scene:

Our Stukas, with sirens screaming, swooped down on the enemy positions and the hill [Ras El Madauer] was soon hidden by a thick pall of smoke and dust. Our artillery opened fire on the break-in points – with good effect. ... The enemy fought with remarkable tenacity. Even their wounded went on defending themselves with small arms fire and stayed in the fight to their last breath.

Later in his description he wrote, *Shortly afterwards a batch of some 50 or 60 Australian prisoners was marched off close beside us – immensely big and powerful men,* (Continued next page)



Regt at Werribee — 1940

THE ROMMEL PAPERS *continued*

who without question represented an elite formation of the British Empire, a fact that was also evident in battle. [We liked Rommel – apparently it was mutual admiration!].

The siege caused him problems, Rommel wrote:

Our greatest worry was still the difficult strategic situation caused by our dual task of having to maintain the siege of Tobruk and at the same time be ready for major British attacks from Egypt. ... with magnificent troops in its garrison, Tobruk presented us with immense difficulties.

We thought the German 88-mm was the best artillery weapon of the time, yet Rommel admired the British 25-pounder gun (as a field gun and in its anti-tank role). He said: *A long arm is decisive and here the British had the best of it. It was not pleasant to be exposed to the fire of their 25-pounders at extreme range and to be unable to make an effective reply.*

During the Afrika Korps headlong rush to Alamein the Germans collected much British equipment and some 85% of their vehicle strength was of British or US manufacture for which they had no spares. Shortage of supplies, especially petrol and ammunition, frustrated Rommel at every turn. Rommel wrote,

Fortunately we found 1,500 rounds of artillery ammunition in a captured British strong-point which enabled us to keep a few batteries of captured British 25-pdr guns in action. During the July battles at Alamein Rommel was impressed by the astonishing amount of ammunition the powerful British artillery threw at the Germans.

[Rommel uses the term *British* to describe his enemy whether British, South African, Indian, New Zealander or Australian].

Rommel singled out the Australian infantry and artillery for special praise. He wrote, *The battle which began on 23rd October 1942, turned the tide of war in Africa against us and, in fact, probably represented the turning point of the whole struggle..... At 2140 hrs a barrage of immense weight opened over the whole line such drum-fire had never before been seen on the African front and was to continue throughout the whole of the Alamein battle..... the terrible British artillery fire grew to WWI proportions ... they had overwhelming material superiority ... with extreme concentrations of artillery fire and continuous air attacks by powerful waves of bombers.*

Speaking about the artillery tactics in particular, Rommel said, *The British artillery once again*

demonstrated its well-known excellence. A particular feature was its great mobility and tremendous speed of reaction to the needs of the assault troops. ... In addition to the advantage given by their abundant supplies of ammunition, the British benefited greatly from the long range of their guns which enabled them to take the Italian artillery positions under fire at a range at which the Italian guns, most of which were limited to 6,000 yards, were unable to hit back. The greater part of our artillery [at Alamein] was made up of these obsolete Italian guns; this was a particularly distressing circumstance for us.

Shortly after the battle of El Alamein, Rommel wrote: *... the war is lost and an attempt should be made as soon as possible to arrive at a compromise peace.* He saw that Germany could never defeat the major powers – United States, Russia and Britain – but many thousands more lives were squandered by the Axis supreme command before the war ended.

This review gives you a mere glimpse of what Rommel shares with his readers in *The Rommel Papers*, he carries you along with him in his command vehicle, firstly in Europe, then two years in North Africa, back to Europe, the allied invasion and ultimately to his tragic death by forced suicide.

The book, *The Rommel Papers* is heartily recommended.

Editor's Note

I have a note in my diary for 13th May 1941, that "the German Army's co-op. plane, a high wing monoplane, has been flying over our lines daily lately, usually escorted by three fighters.

"The 'Baron' as we have nick-named the pilot is game as he flies through heavy and light anti-aircraft fire, yet always seems to get away with it. On four occasions we have missed him by feet, making him dive steeply away from our tracers. At least we upset his observations."

At that time we assumed that this plane was spotting for the enemy artillery. As the Rommel papers record that the General had a Fieseler Storch (a high wing monoplane) in the desert at the time maybe he was carrying out his own reconnaissance in the "Baron's plane" at which we were shooting. What a trophy that would have been had we brought the plane down!

Unfortunately, at the time of going to press, the book is not generally available in Melbourne but your library may have a copy.

Hyland's Book Shop, 256 Flinders Street, Melbourne (Telephone 9654 6883) may be able to find a secondhand copy for you.

THE 40-mm BOFORS GUN

From the Swedish Navy to almost all our Allied and enemy armies!

The 40-mm **Bofors** gun has by now passed virtually into legend as one of the most successful weapons of its type that has ever been produced, and it was used by nearly all protagonists during World War II, and a measure of its effectiveness can be seen by the fact that it is still in service to this day.

The 40-mm (1.575-in) Bofors gun had its origins in a 1928 request from the Swedish navy for A B Bofors to design a light anti-aircraft gun. The first weapon was manufactured in 1930 and was subsequently produced in single- and twin-gun mountings for the navy, and on a mobile ground mounting for the army. It was this latter version that became the most famous, for it was soon seen to be the best gun of its type available. It had a high muzzle velocity (making it an ideal anti-aircraft weapon), it fired a good-sized projectile with a worthwhile payload that could bring down virtually any aircraft that it hit, and the mounting and carriage were relatively light and handy to use in action. Within a few years orders were flooding into the A. B. Bofors factory at Karlskroga but more importantly at the time, a number of foreign governments negotiated for licence production of the gun and its ammunition.

These nations included Hungary, Poland, Finland, Greece, Norway and many other countries as well.

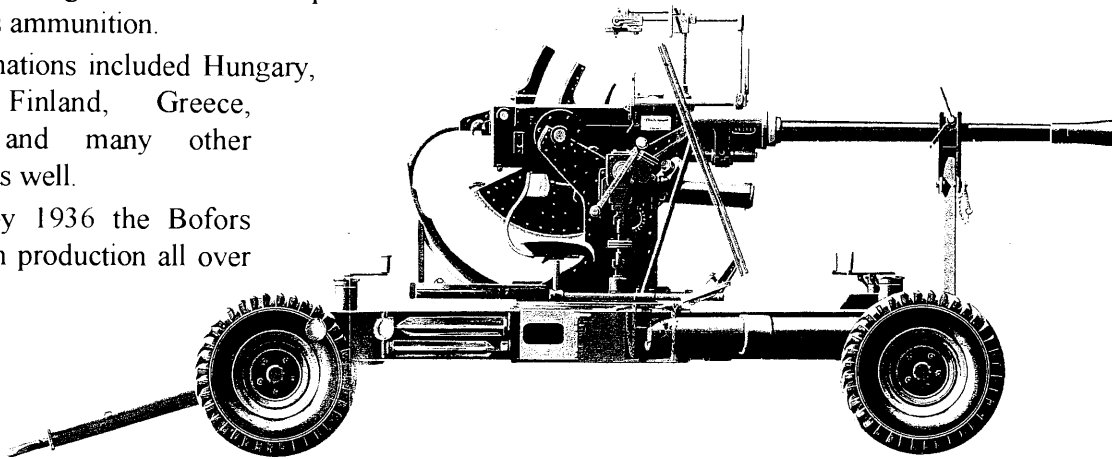
Thus by 1936 the Bofors gun was in production all over

The gun used a robust clip-fed mechanism in which the sequence was automatic once the gunner had pressed the trigger. As he did so a round was rammed into the breech, the breech closed and the weapon fired, the spent case being ejected ready for another round to be fed, all in a sequence that continued as long as the trigger was pressed. If the barrel became overheated it could be rapidly changed.

After 1940 the main centres of Bofors production were in the United Kingdom (Gun AA MkI) and the United States where the original Swedish design was reproduced virtually unchanged as (40-mm Gun M1).

On the German side production was continued at the Kongsberg Arsenal in Norway for use by the German army and the Luftwaffe as the 4-cm Flak 28 (Bofors). In the Far East weapons captured in the Dutch East Indies were used by the Japanese.

The Soviet Union received some numbers of Bofors from the Americans under Lend-Lease, so it can be seen that Bofors guns were in action on all fronts throughout the war



Europe for many armies in a bewildering arrangement of cross-deals. For instance the United Kingdom took out a licence, but was in such a hurry to re-arm with the Bofors gun that it also purchased quantities from Poland and Hungary. France wanted to set up a line but purchased guns from Poland.

Some nations, such as Poland, incorporated their own modifications, contributing a lighter carriage (in the *40-mm armata przeciwlotnicza wz 36*) which was later adopted by the British

Progressive developments to the carriage and sights were gradually introduced and there were many and various models of naval mountings.

Specifications of the Bofors gun

Calibre: 40 mm.

Length of piece: 2.25 metres.

Weight in action: 2460 kg.

Elevation: minus 5 degrees to plus 90 degrees.

Traverse: 360 degrees

Muzzle velocity: 854 metres per second

Maximum ceiling: 7200 metres

Rate of fire: (Cyclic) 120 rpm.

Shell weight: 0.89 kg.

* * *

BUNURONG MEMORIAL PARK

Our Honorary Secretary, John Campbell (8th Battery) who is Chairman of the Cheltenham and Regional Cemeteries Trust, was the host to several hundred guests at the Official Opening and Dedication of the Sturdee Memorial Gardens at Bunurong Memorial Park on 17th May 2000. The Park has Melbourne's newest cemetery and crematorium.

The formal opening was carried out by the Hon. Bruce Scott, Minister for Veterans' Affairs and minister assisting the Minister for Defence. An impressive service followed, the speakers being Chaplains from the Navy, Air Force and Army, and Bruce Ruxton, together with hymns, anthems and the Ode.

The Sturdee Memorial Garden was named in remembrance of members of the Sturdee family who have made a great contribution to Australian war efforts over the past century.

The Memorial includes a free-standing Cross of Remembrance and Honour Rolls in the form of seven plaques listing the names of all service personnel who died as a result of the Vietnam conflict. The guests were provided with afternoon tea in the attractive surrounds of the Bunurong Memorial Park upon which some \$20 million has been expended to date to provide "a place where nature's beauty gives peace of mind".



John Campbell presenting his welcoming and informative speech at Bunurong Memorial Park

Jack Phillips' Plaque Found

Mrs Margot Warren of Mount Clear sent in a copy of an article published in *The Western Times*, May 24, 2000, regarding the finding of a memorial plaque to her late father, Jack Phillips. The plaque was originally erected in an Avenue of Honour in the late 1940s; but became lost during a reconstruction of the Geelong Road, Footscray in the 1970s. Jack Phillips of 7th Battery lost his life while aboard the British destroyer HMS *Hereward* which was sunk in the Mediterranean by the German Luftwaffe on May 29, 1941, during the evacuation of Crete.

Survivors told Margot that her father remained on deck when the order was given to abandon ship. Jack was a strong swimmer who used to swim across the Yarra at Williamstown. He was last seen leaning against a funnel with his mate Tom McNamara, who was bigger and stronger than Jack, but could not swim.

Her aunt told Margot that before they went off to war, Tom had said, "I'll look after Jack" Jack had countered, *Well if we're in the water, I'll save you*

Margot Warren said, *"That's the reason why I think my father stayed."*

Margot thanks the members of our Association who wrote to her after her note appeared in *Mufti*.

POLISH MEDAL FOR TOBRUK

Some months ago, a TV news item featured an investiture of the Polish Medal of Valour to some men who served in the Siege of Tobruk and many have wondered why they didn't get one.

It was awarded by the Polish Government to Australian troops who served alongside the Carpathian Brigade in Tobruk.

Unit Associations did not receive advice; but in 1991 names of applicants for the medal were supplied by the Rats of Tobruk Association. If you were not a member of that Association at that time or did not apply to the Association you missed out. Very few members of 8th Battery applied so you are not alone if you did miss it.

It seems that the Polish Government does not contemplate a re-run of the medal.

If you wish to visit Bunurong Park, it is located at 790 Frankston - Dandenong Road, Dandenong South, 3175 (just north of Thompsons Road).

THE 2/3rd LEADER AT THE MARCH

Due to health problems which beset us at awkward times the Committee has agreed that at the first meeting each year the Regimental leader of the Anzac March *and* two emergencies will be selected.

The committee is restricted to the following criteria. The leader (and the emergencies) will have a history of service to the Association and regular attendance at the March. They should be able to march without walking aids and, as we have few senior officers able or willing to march now, wartime or subsequent rank will no longer be a consideration. The Committee's choice stands for one year

STAN AND THE ROTARY RUNNER

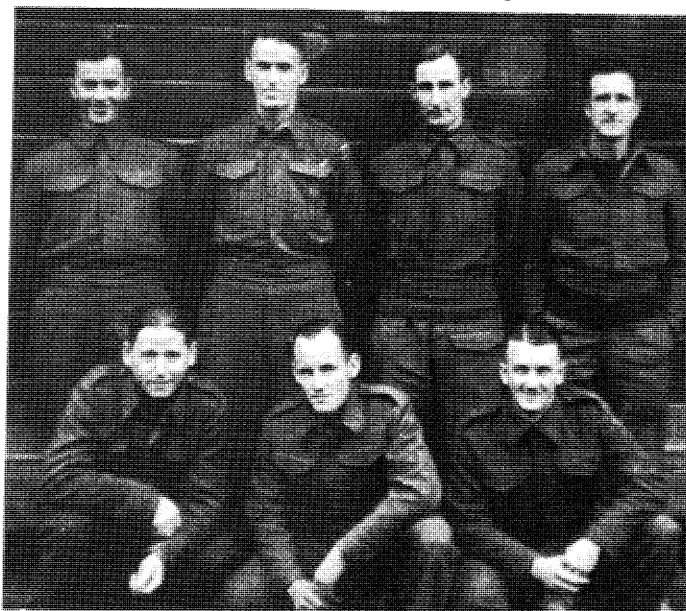
Surfers Paradise Rotarian Des La Rance invented the Rotary Runner wheelchair after seeing physically handicapped disabled kids in Fiji who couldn't afford wheelchairs and who had to crawl or drag themselves through dirt or mud on a piece of carpet. Des commenced manufacturing them from the frames, wheels, bolts and seats of used bicycles at a cost of about \$100 each, as against \$800 for new wheelchairs

Stan Baker (8) assisted Des and made about 18 Rotary Runners in his own workshop, then, because they were short of frames commenced making pairs of frames full time. Stan continued until his shoulder packed up and on medical advice had to give up his wonderful efforts for the Fijian kids.



Stan Baker and "Rotary Runner" Chair.

At PG52 PoW Concentration Camp Chiavari, near Genova, Italy — 1942



Rear: Charlie Perry, Reg Crawley, Bill Irvine, Jack Henry
Front: Roy Thomson, Sammy Rhodes, Jimmy George.

HALLOWED GROUND

Christopher Jobson of the Australian War Memorial was asked why our parade grounds are treated with apparent reverence and why are personnel not permitted to cross them except when on parade? Here is his answer:

At the completion of battles in days gone by, Retreat would be sounded and units would reassemble in the form of hollow squares to call the roll and count the dead. The dead were placed within the squares and no one used those areas as thoroughfares. Today the parade grounds represent these squares and hence a unit's dead.

It is deemed to be hallowed ground, soaked with the blood of our fallen, and the areas are respected as such.

From Vetaffairs

CONFIDENTIAL REPORT – OFFICERS

"Never makes the same mistake twice, but has made them all at once"

"An ignorant unoffending peasant..."

"This officer would get lost in a revolving door and starve to death"

"Can express a sentence in two paragraphs...."

"This officer pushes doors marked pull"

"Good natured and helpless...."

"Thoughtful, original, articulate and stupid..."

Two photos taken of the same three men 60 years apart.



Left to Right – Gunners Len Woolcock, Bill Waller and Mal Webster

No.1 photo was taken in 1940 in the Alexandra Gardens, prior to the Regiment's farewell march along Swanston St. Melbourne.

No.2 was taken in Year 2000 with the three men in the same positions but this time Len Woolcock is aged 85, Bill Waller 83 and Mal Webster 79 years.

All three survived the sinking, by the Luftwaffe, of the British Destroyer HMS *Hereward* on May 29, 1941 during the evacuation of Crete. They were rescued by the Italian Navy and thus become POWs.

During the Armistice between Italy and the Allies in September 1943, Len Woolcock was scooped up by the Germans and spent the rest of WWII as a POW in Germany.

Both Bill Waller and Mal Webster were able to escape, in September 1943, from Vercelli work camps in the Province of Piedmont and were not recaptured. Bill Waller was eventually interned in Switzerland after a very hazardous and extremely dangerous trip over Monte Rosa in the Italian Alps, bordering Switzerland. Included in the party were two former members of the Regiment, Ernie Preiser and Tom Russell.

Mal Webster, together with Bill Wrigglesworth (7th Battery), after being well assisted by Italian sympathisers, finally spent the last year of WWII with the Italian Partisan Forces involved in guerilla warfare against the Nazi and Fascist forces.



John Hepworth (8 Bty) Treasurer for 53 years!.
Reg Swift (9 & 235 Bty). Geoff George "Dirty 13" (9th)



9 Battery members get together.— Alec Hepburn,
Jasper Coghlan, Dale Croke, Griff Weatherly.